

*The following tribute to the Lynyrd Skynyrd band by Congressman Bachus and Congressman Connie Mack of Florida was printed in the Congressional Record on Thursday, July 22.*

In the music world, it is challenging enough for a band to record one hit song, much less become a voice for an entire region and a true icon. That is why Congressman Connie Mack and I are pleased to jointly recognize the accomplishments and patriotic spirit of the legendary Lynyrd Skynyrd.

From humble beginnings, Lynyrd Skynyrd has become one of the most revered and accomplished bands in the history of music, having sold nearly 30 million records worldwide in the last four decades. Through their live performances and the music and songs still played on radio stations around the world every day, the members of Lynyrd Skynyrd have established themselves as timeless artists who transcend any one musical era or generation.

As validated by their induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2006, Lynyrd Skynyrd has had a seminal impact on the development of rock and country music and a profound influence on the career development of many artists who followed in their creative footsteps.

Through their collective voices, the band has become a beacon for regional identity and pride in the American South. This is perhaps best epitomized by the song "Sweet Home Alabama," an anthem so universally identified with the state of Alabama that it is the official motto displayed on license plates.

Since their start in Jacksonville, Florida in the late 1960s, Lynyrd Skynyrd has been a spokesman for the everyday working man and woman, the friends and neighbors of their formative years. Their ability to capture a unique part of the American spirit has given their music emotional meaning to many fans and built a legacy that continues to grow year after year.

Amid triumph and loss, these sons of the south have evolved from band to close-knit family. A tragic airplane crash in 1977 claimed original members Steve Gaines, Cassie Gaines, and lead singer Ronnie Van Zant, but Ronnie's brother Johnny carried on the tradition as the new

vocalist. Devoted fans cherish the contributions of Bob Burns, Ed King, and Artimus Pyle and remember the legacy of Allen Collins, Leon Wilkeson, Billy Powell, and Ean Evans. Today, led by core members Johnny Van Zant, Gary Rossington, Rickey Medlock, and Michael Cartellone, Lynyrd Skynyrd continues to share an unbreakable bond with the fans they count as family as well.

Lynyrd Skynyrd has been a generous supporter of our men and women in the armed forces for many years. The band has long understood that our military personnel bravely and unselfishly stand guard over our everyday security and freedom. They have enthusiastically raised money for military families and played countless shows for our service members in uniform. Their song “Red, White, and Blue” was written as a tribute to the men and women who serve in the defense of freedom.

As representatives of timeless American values and champions of working class heroes, Lynyrd Skynyrd continues to entertain and inspire millions of fans across the world. Along with Congressman Mack, I find it highly appropriate that the people’s House takes time to recognize this classic band for lasting contributions not just to the world of music, but to American popular culture as a whole.